

The traditions of democracy are threatened by media consolidation. A blatant example of the excesses of such power is Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election.

Although Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest, this is not happening. Getting more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy is a clear and present danger to the freedom and diversity of expressions needed for democracy. It's crucial that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive local news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. License renewal should reflect the public interest: it should include a non-trivial evaluation of service rendered to our diverse populations' needs for responsible fair-handed use of our airwaves. I do not agree with the current lack of a "equal time" doctrine and see Sinclair's current choices as a clear extreme result of such tendencies.

Thank you.